

THE CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

June/July 2013

Price: For whatever it's worth.

The Marathon Bombings

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

April 15th started out full of hope. The weather was perfect as 27,000 men and women from 60 different nations lined up for the 117th Boston Marathon. I saw racers of every age, some in wheelchairs, some blind running with guides. There were even two dwarves. Thousands ran for special causes. The diversity and positive spirit was incredible.

I ran well until 18 miles when my quads seized up. I slowed down and eventually walked a few stretches. After training all winter, I can't tell you how frustrating it was. To make matters worse, at the 22-mile mark, I was passed by a young man in a hamburger costume. I cried, "You've got to be kidding me!" But then, seeing the agony visible on my face, fans lining the course cheered like I was an elite runner. Children put out their hands for me to slap, and I felt the inherent goodness of the marathon.

At 24.5 miles, my son Aiden, clad in his high school cross-country uniform, jumped the fence to help me finish. I was afraid I'd collapse, but Aiden kept me going. Once we turned from Hereford to Boylston Street and could see the finish, he encouraged me to find the strength to sprint. We crossed the line together and had just had our picture taken, when we heard an enormous explosion. We turned around and saw the second bomb go off. Our hearts sank.

We spent the next two hours anxious for news. Most runners had family and friends still on the course. Thankfully, my wife Claire made a last minute decision to avoid Boylston Street.

On the morning after the bombings, she and I went to Mass to pray for the injured. Crossing the Boston Common afterwards, we saw rows of military vehicles, along with heavily armed and armored soldiers

and police officers.

That afternoon, Rebekah Chessic, our intern from Assumption College, posted on Facebook, "We are not alone. So many across the world are mourning the loss or injury of friends and loved ones..." Rebekah received a torrent of



angry responses calling her "unbelievably insensitive" and "vile."

Four days later, bombing suspects Tamerlan and Dzhokar Tsarnaev killed MIT police officer Sean Collier and then car-jacked a vehicle. After a chase and gun battle, police shot and killed Tamerlan while Dzhokar escaped. In an attempt to capture him, police put the bulk of Boston and surrounding cities under martial law. Mass transportation was halted. People were told not to go to work or leave their homes. Police toting assault weapons searched houses without warrants or success in finding the suspect. Only when the lock-down was lifted did a man discover the wounded Dzhokar Tsarnaev hiding under a boat. Police fired three hundred rounds before arresting the unarmed suspect.

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The Power Among Us

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

On a bright October day in 1991, Suzanna Gratia Hupp found herself and her father ducking behind a dining table at Luby's Restaurant in Killeen, Texas. Twenty feet away, George "Jo Jo" Hennard, an unemployed merchant mariner, armed with a Glock and Ruger P89 pistol, was randomly and insanely shooting customers eating lunch. Years earlier, Hupp, 35, bought a firearm and took a few shooting lessons. Using the table as a ledge, she was confident that even with her amateur skills, she could fire a life-saving shot. "I've got him," she thought. But in 1991, Texas still forbade its citizens from carrying their guns everywhere. In deference to the law, she had stashed hers in the car which was a good 100 feet from where she and her father were now crouching.

While Hupp considered her options, Hennard kept firing. He gunned down Al Gratia, Hupp's 71-year-old father, when he lunged forward to stop the killer and minutes later, fatally shot her mother. On that bright October day, Hennard ultimately killed 23 people and wounded 20 more before turning the gun on himself. It was the worst gun massacre in US history until the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings.

After the wanton killing of her parents, Hupp was "mad as hell" at her legislators. The only thing their gun laws had done was "prevent good people from protecting themselves." A chiropractor and mother of two, she became a leading advocate for the right to carry a concealed weapon, which is now law in Texas and many other states. She served ten years as a Republican representative for the state legislature, wrote a book about her one-woman cam-

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Power

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paign against gun control and was the first Texan to be given a life-time membership in the National Rifle Association.

Hupp opposes universal background checks and a ban on assault weapons, and would not deny guns to the emotionally or mentally unstable. In the aftermath of the Sandy Hook massacre, she could be heard on the radio and at Congressional hearings, a compelling and chilling preacher of the saving power of firearms.

Many Americans, including a young father I met after Mass one day, share Hupp's faith in firepower. He disagreed with our anti-gun position and was in the process of purchasing a firearm. Sandy Hook had just happened and he wanted to protect his small children. Flustered at this revelation, which came minutes after Holy Communion, I forgot to cite the many studies showing a gun in the home is more likely to be used in a suicide, homicide, or unintentional killing than to thwart an intruder. "As Catholics, we need to find our security in the Eucharist," I said, pointing to the sanctuary from which he had emerged. The suggestion failed to resonate for he was, he said, "a practical Catholic."

Months before I heard Hupp's story, I attended a workshop on reconciliation at a Consistent Life Conference in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The presenters were Rachel Muha and Vicki Schieber, mothers of children who were brutally and randomly murdered. They were among the most practical Catholics I have met, wielding love and forgiveness against the destruc-

tive circumstances they faced with as much certainty as Hupp might wield a gun.

Eighteen-year-old Brian Muha was a promising pre-med student at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio when Nathan Herring, 18, and Terrell Rahim Yarbrough, 19, inner-city youths high on crack, broke into Brian's apartment, pistol-whipped and abducted him and roommate Aaron Land, and then shot them to death because they wanted "to see what it was like to kill somebody." A search party



later found the students' bodies by the side of a Pennsylvania highway, lying beneath a bush of wild roses.

Shannon Schieber was finishing her first year of graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania when Troy Graves broke into her apartment, raped, and murdered her. Graves later confessed to a string of rapes, but Shannon is believed to be the only woman he murdered.

Muha says the decision to forgive the killers of her beloved boy was an act of the will made in obedience to a merciful God long before she had any "warm feelings." She has deployed this forgiveness with remarkable discipline. Months after Brian's murder, she attempted to visit the imprisoned youths, but was told victims cannot initiate contact with an inmate. At their trial, she used her victim impact

statement—typically an occasion to enumerate one's loss—to plead for them to consider their redemption. And she daily prays for Nathan and Terrell. Brian and Aaron would want that, she once told the *LA Times*. "The best hope of for their killers of going to heaven turns out to be us."

For both women, justice is not simply locking someone away, but replenishing the good stolen from the world by the evil action that has occurred. Within a year of Brian's murder, Muha purchased the house from which he was abducted, a place "where evil happened," and offered it as rent-free lodgings for students at Franciscan University. After learning Nathan and Terrell were raised amid violence and drug addiction, she started an after-school and summer program for children from one of Columbus, Ohio's poorest neighborhoods. The project, which she describes as "the hardest and most joyful work I have ever done" thrives and expands.

Schieber emerged from a debilitating grief to push for reform of police response to rape calls (a factor in Shannon's death). She and her husband successfully argued against executing Graves, who was sentenced to life. Over the years, Schieber has become a prominent and persuasive voice in the anti-death penalty movement, affirming forgiveness rather than execution as the path to closure for victims. "The death penalty is against our religion, a belief system in which life is held to be sacred," she once wrote.

In these times, when bombings and shootings are terrifyingly commonplace, I understand the desire to grab a gun. But a world in which everyone is "packing" is horrible to contemplate. And hopeless.

The examples of Muha and Schieber, mothers battered by grief, point to another way. At the workshop, when they spoke of their dead children—mused on a sweet memory or an excruciating detail from their child's final hours—their shoulders slumped and their voices were barely audible. Not your conventional warriors. Yet the power these women possess is undeniable. Brutality did not defeat them. Having walked through hell, they emerged merciful. While I wept at their loss, I left their presentation inwardly singing, "**O Death where is your victory? Where is your sting?**" Love really *is* invincible. **Ω**

On Pilgrimage

by Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from the July/August 1977 issue of the Catholic Worker. Dorothy Day was 79 at that time. The Catholic Worker, which she co-founded with Peter Maurin, celebrated its 80th anniversary on May 1, 2013.

It is low tide, on a dull, grey day, after a week of glorious weather, a good time to settle down to writing my column. How rich we are, we who profess voluntary poverty as a foundation for our work as agitators, to be able to take a ferry ride and be, within an hour, in a rural area which is still part of New York City. Staten Island is not as fashionable as Long Island, its beaches are not clean and sandy, but rocky, strewn often with driftwood and debris. But my conversion took place here. My Russian and my Jewish friends were neighbors, including Mike Gold, and his brothers Manny and George, all Communists, who regarded my spiritual struggles as a stage through which I was passing — my own business, in other words. Mike came to see us often, some years later, in the little apartment on Fifteenth St., where the Catholic Worker started. It was his brother, George Granich, who was one of the organizers of the Hunger March on Washington, which I supported and wrote about as a reporter for *Commonweal* or *America*. I'm not sure which. (Memory is so strange a thing. My copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions* has a long chapter about it. I can't find it now. Someone is always walking off with the book I happen to be reading!)

I am writing this in the early morning, and a mourning dove is making doleful sounds in one of the beautiful mimosa trees, which abound hereabouts. Tamar, my daughter, intends to transplant some tiny, mimosa seedlings. No matter how small these seedlings are, they close up their fernlike leaves if you touch them.

Rita Corbin is here too, and all day she has been carving a woodcut of Sacco and Vanzetti, the fiftieth anniversary of whose deaths we are commemorating in this issue.

I, too, wish to write about these two anarchists, because that is the word, or label, which confuses many of our readers (especially the bishops?) and "clarification of thought" is the first plank in the Catholic Worker program. After all, study, and clarification of thought, leading to the communication of ideas, is why we publish the *Catholic Worker* over all these years. The 90,000 or so copies which we mail out nine times a year go to readers all over the world, and who knows where the seeds we are planting take root.

I add my contribution to the recalling of Sacco and Vanzetti, because I was very much alive when their execution



took place, and will never forget that day of grief. My sister Della, and her friend Katherine Ann Porter were among the many demonstrators and mourners at the scene, and I would have been there except for my baby daughter (now a mother and a grandmother). We spent the day in mourning, and Tamar's father lay with his face to the wall, almost unconscious with shock and grief. The struggle to establish their innocence had been a long one, and they were put to death.

To us at the Catholic Worker, anarchism means "Love God, and do as you will." **"For such, there is no law."** **"If anyone asks for your cloak, give him your coat too."** One could go on with these Scriptural teachings of Jesus, though the above quotations could be expressed in many ways.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... If, in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable. Eye hath not seen, nor

ear heard...the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him."

What sample of His love in Creation all around us! Even in the city, the changing sky, the trees, frail though they may be, which prisoners grow on Riker's Island, to be planted around the city, bear witness. People — all humankind, in some way.

"In the beginning, God created heaven and earth." Looking out over the bay, the gulls, the **"paths in the sea,"** the tiny ripples stirring a patch of water here and there, the reflections of clouds on the surface — how beautiful it all is....

Stormy day. Woke at 5:30 A.M.. Reading scriptures — Genesis and Psalms. Today I will begin with the Ascension and read Acts. Mass at nine....

I need a Bible, large print. I read so much, my eyes tire. Every day we have been sitting on the beach, Doris Nielson is learning to work with stained glass. She made us a Chi-Rho. We also have Isidore Fazio's colorful, stained glass Cross hanging in one window.

Still reading *Dr. Zhivago* — his last days in Moscow. Remembering Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Wally and Rose Carmen, and Mike Gold, all of these friends of mine who spent time in Moscow at this same time Pasternak writes of. And Diego Rivera in Mexico City, and his telling me of the reprinting in Russia, of my story from *New Masses*, "Having a Baby," "Go to the Soviet Union," he said. "You can collect royalties."

...I woke up with great feelings of joy and gratitude to God for His great gifts of the Holy Spirit. **"Ask and you shall receive."**

...How widespread the Catholic Worker is! Now two responsible women from Maryhouse may be taken from us — one for Guam, the other to start a house of hospitality in a Brooklyn slum. But other women are coming (and men too) and, of course, will go away to extend the work, and do even better than we do, as we flounder here in the hot slums, trying, as Peter Maurin used to say, "to make the kind of society where it is easier to be good...." Ω

The Boston Marathon Bombings

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Aiden & Scott moments before the bombings

Once in custody, Dzhokar was questioned without a lawyer, and a military trial was openly discussed. Some columnists and politicians called for stronger immigration restrictions, while others favored widespread video monitoring and even drone surveillance of next year's Boston Marathon. One letter writer to *The Worcester Telegram* said, "It is long past time for us to go 'Israeli' with security in this country."

Two weeks later, after Tamerlan's body was accepted by Graham Putnam and Mahoney Funeral Home in Worcester, the mortuary was besieged by a flag-waving mob that wanted his body "thrown in a wood chipper" or returned to Russia. Peter Stefan, the funeral home's director, is well-known for his willingness to bury unwanted souls. He was the only mortician in Massachusetts who would bury AIDS victims in the early years of that epidemic. He buries the poorest of the poor. (He laid to rest two of our guests.) When asked why he would accept the body of a "terrorist," Mr. Stefan cited his oath as a funeral director to give everyone a decent burial. He even said, "I'd bury Adolf Hitler if they asked me to. I'm not burying what he stood for; I'm just burying the body."

After it was reported in *The Worcester Telegram* that I planned a vigil to support Mr. Stefan, an anonymous caller told me I was a "media whore" and that "Holding this vigil is like putting a gun to your head." I asked the man, "Did you lose a loved one to the bombings? Do you know someone who was injured or who ran the marathon?" After he answered "No," I asked, "How is it then that you are filled with so much more anger than I am when half of my family could have been killed?" Thankfully, no one was harmed at our vigil, and Tsarnaev's body was privately laid to rest on May 9.

It has been three very emotional weeks. From the outset, I shared Rebekah's initial reaction. The sound of the Boston bombs vividly evoked memories of atrocities I was close to overseas. I especially recalled standing by the ruins of a West Jerusalem pizza parlor where, 24 hours earlier, a Palestinian suicide bomber had killed himself and 15 others, including nine children. My mind was also drawn to a service I attended in Kabul for nine young boys machine-gunned from a low-flying US helicopter.

The willful murder of the innocent is so appalling that it's hard not to conclude that the perpetrators are monsters who deserve no quarter. But that kind of thinking

bombing of Coventry expunged British remorse for the fire-bombing of Dresden. The same can be said about Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. As an Irish historian once said, "The past murders the future."

It is natural to feel shock, grief, and anger over the cruelty of the marathon bombings, but we will never escape the cycle of violence and hate without empathizing with others, especially those our government murders in our name. Unfortunately, politicians seldom make this connection. On April 18, at Boston's Cathedral of the Holy Cross, President Obama offered solace to the marathon bombing victims, and then went home to lead a government that murders innocents with drones and tortures other innocents in Guantánamo.

As bad as the President was, the Vice President was worse. At the Sean Collier's funeral, Biden dragged out the Bush/Cheney line that terrorists attack us because they hate our goodness. Biden ignored testimony before the US Senate that drone missile attacks on civilians in Yemen were driving people to join Al Qaeda. He paid no mind to reports that the marathon bombers may have been angry over the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He could not acknowledge that American violence had turned anyone against us.

The arrogance was stunning. Biden's summation was even worse. He quoted Seamus Heaney's "The Cure at Troy" out of context. The poem bemoans Catholic and Protestant victims in Northern Ireland, but Biden misused it as a rallying cry for US victory in the war on terror. Have we no shame?

More questions are arising. How will payouts of upwards to a million dollars for marathon bombing victims play in Afghanistan where families of those killed by US troops are offered only \$2,000 or \$3,000? Is anyone offering to compensate the thousand

innocent victims of corporate greed at the garment factory in Bangladesh? Are the Afghan and Bangladeshi lives worth less?

In the two weeks following the marathon, 29 people of color were shot, six of them killed, in Boston. Police Commissioner Edward Davis said,



Women, in front of Graham Putnam & Mahoney, say, "We need compassion, not hate, in the face of tragedy."

lead the US, after 3,000 civilians were murdered on 9/11, to kill 300,000 civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq. Terror breeds terror. The 800,000 Iraqi children killed by US-led sanctions were part of Osama bin Laden's rationalization for attacking civilians in New York City. The German

"There's been an outpouring of sympathy from across the world that doesn't attach to what happens in the day in and out.... Each life is precious and should receive the same type of attention." NAACP leaders are asking if racism is not partially responsible for the disparity.

At times like this, American Muslims are especially sensitive to bigotry (recall how they were falsely accused for the Oklahoma City bombing). Our friend Nana Abdelkader, whose son lives and goes to school a couple of blocks from where the bombs went off, said, "I am so sick and tired of my faith being on trial every time some psycho who happens to be Muslim does something wrong; as if Muslims don't have psychological disorders or people in that group don't snap like everyone else does. NO ONE questioned the faith of the Adam Lanza, or the guy who shot Congresswoman Gifford in Arizona, or the medical student who killed people in a movie theater or Timothy McVeigh; and the list goes on."

Former US Representative Ron Paul sounded yet another alarm when he decried "paramilitary police riding in tanks



and pointing automatic weapons at innocent citizens." He said the acceptance for putting cities under martial law was "unprecedented" and "should frighten us as much or more than the attack itself."

The American Civil Liberties Union spoke out against the government's long delay in reading Tsarnaev his Miranda rights. Former Central Massachusetts ACLU director Ronal Madnick said, "These rights must be protected for everyone, regardless of who they are because if rights are withheld from someone, they can be taken away from anyone."

Thankfully, there was a groundswell of support for Peter Stefan. Vickie Langohr of

Watertown, Massachusetts said, "School shooters, murderers, and pedophiles are buried every day in the US Even the most heinous criminal has the right in the US to be defended by a lawyer, and every human deserves a dignified burial. Respecting the fundamental rights of all shows America at its best, and the directors and staff of the Graham Putnam and Mahoney Funeral home represent the highest values we possess."

Boston resident Maria Rodrigues thanked Stefan for his "honorable efforts to care for the body of Tamerlan Tsarnaev and for trying to bury him with dignity." She went on to say, "In these difficult times, your actions demonstrate the best that human beings have to offer, regardless of nationality or religion: we are able to rise above the barbarism of hate and intolerance, to uphold the virtues of respect and tolerance. Your actions make us strong, they make Boston strong, and they make America strong. Most of all, they honor the victims of Tsarnaev, who will not let hate defeat their courage."

My own grief over the marathon bombings was healed considerably by the 43 people who came out on April 7 to vigil in support of Graham Putnam and Mahoney. The gathering reminded me of the decency of most Americans.

Another decent American, Martha Mullen of Virginia, was so upset with the anti-burial protesters, whom she felt "portrayed America at its worst," that she took it upon herself to personally arrange Tsarnaev's burial. She said she was motivated by Christ's command to love our enemies.

Mullen's goodness brought to mind Christina Olsen, who, after her sister was murdered on 9/11, joined Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow appealing to then President Bush not to go to war. She later went to Afghanistan to comfort the victims of US air strikes. With the moral authority of their loss, people like Christina put flesh on Christ's call to love the enemy. Her love challenges me to reject vengeance as an appropriate response to the surviving Tsarnaev brother or his college friends, who tried to protect him from arrest. Rebekah's critics want her to wait before broadening her compassion, but Christ forgave from the Cross itself, and

Christina knew that love is most potent when it is most difficult to express.

Lastly, I draw healing from continuing to run. Less than a week after the bombings, my friend Hicham Maalouf and I signed up for the Vermont Marathon on May 26. Although we are still

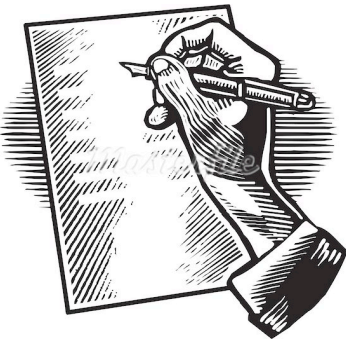


Hicham & Scott leave for the Boston Marathon

recovering physically and emotionally from Boston, we are determined to race again as a statement of hope. Hicham and I are not alone. *The Boston Globe* reported on April 26 that runners are scrambling to find a summer marathon which will qualify them to run in Boston on April 22, 2014. It could be the largest turnout in the Boston Marathon's 118 years. *Globe* columnist and runner Shira Springer said, "True to the spirit of the sport, marathoners want to show resiliency and contribute to something bigger, much bigger than a race, to give back in their own way by coming back."

Non-runners often wonder what motivates people to run year-round in all weather. They think we are solitary masochists, but they don't realize that we are part of a real community of friends, a family that wants to be together in all conditions. When violence strikes the innocent, the love of friends and family is a more powerful source of healing and security than the waving of flags or guns. I believe this resilient community will help us go on in hope. Ω

Letters



Dear Claire,

...The Boston Marathon bombings certainly casts a pall over what should otherwise be lighthearted community gatherings and events in the future.

Years ago, our beloved associate pastor was found murdered in the rectory right next door to the school. Because he was so hugely popular, having been a reporter for the local paper and counselor for the local alcohol and drug dependency treatment center with a highly successful program, his funeral was to be held at the Civic Center so that the great number of non-Catholic mourners could also attend.

It was exactly at the time when that assassination attempt was made on Pope John Paul II, and a radical, militant fundamentalist group from a neighboring state had come in and staple-gunned violently anti-Catholic posters on every timber utility pole in urban Jackson threatening some sort of apocalyptic end time. There was no way of knowing if these events were in any way connected, but local law enforcement did warn us that gathering for Fr. Vay's funeral could be the target for a bombing. We all went anyway. Everyone regarded with fresh respect the company of their fellows, not knowing if we would all survive to walk out again. By God's blessing, there was no incident, but I know the feeling of the marathoners who wonder about the future of their beloved event, as well as their respect for the resolve of those determined to "keep on keeping on."

Mary Duke Guldán
Jackson, Tennessee

Dear Scott,

...You mentioned running in the Boston Marathon....It was good that one of the suspects was brought to justice. Let's hope it is Justice! The cheering after he was caught was like the celebration after

a Super Bowl or World Series victory, and it was not in the realm of decency. This is absolutely not the way to settle any difference between nations — the bombings that is — but the USA is not without guilt.

Jim Yacapucci
Rochester Catholic Worker
Rochester, New York

Dear Scott Schaeffer-Duffy,

I was so pleased to see you petition the Worcester City Council against a slot parlour in town. You're absolutely right — they target the poor, the elderly, the addicted, the desperate, the vulnerable.

John Ribeiro, who is fighting the East Boston casino, has teamed up with Les Bernel of Stop Predatory Gambling to get this as a referendum on the 2014 ballot. We will need 100,000 signatures. We need folks to collect signatures and get them certified at City Hall. Anyone interested should contact John at RepealTheCasinoDeal@gmail.com or Les at les@stoppredatorgambling.org.

Charlotte Burns
Palmer, Massachusetts

Dear Scott, Claire, and community,

...“A Sin to Shop at Walmart?” was a good article.... I really liked how you ended your article with the acknowledgment that we all have inconsistencies, but the main thing is to try.... Ah, we are all contradictory humans, aren't we? That's what I love about the story of the woman washing Jesus feet with expensive perfume. We do our best, but there's room in the Gospels for good times too....

Prior to living here, I would have fully agreed with the idea of banning all guns — and I'm still not keen on them even for the use they have here — hunting. I ate a roast bit of goat tonight that a friend used a gun to shoot. The kids who hunt without a gun use dogs and a knife, and it's a much crueler death for the pigs they hunt. If no hunting happened, the pigs and goats (both introduced animals) would destroy the forest. Yet, even still, I think the folk around here could probably get by on less meat than they do, and use guns less. Definitely in a city situation though — and many country situations too, it seems difficult to understand why guns are needed at all.

The “Economic Peace and Justice” article by Pope Benedict XVI was interesting. I whole-heartedly agree with Benedict's claim that work not done for the common good has lost its value and has become an idol. But, I also believe that work (not defined by income necessarily) gives dignity to people....

Again, thank you for raising awareness with Cassandra Dixon's “Erasing People's Homes” article. I had my garden erased by a bull who, pushed by drought, decided a tin fence wasn't going to stop him when there was maize, tomatoes, chokos, cucumbers, cauliflowers, etc. etc. on the other side and dry wilting bush on his side. I found it devastating to come home to bare earth instead of a lush garden, but an article like Cassandra's reminds me that my life isn't threatened, I'm not surrounded by violence, I'm left with food in the cupboards. (I'd actually already harvested and preserved more than I had this time last year.) I have shelter and clothes, I have friends who helped me fix and straighten the fence and muster the bull. (He's destined for freezers after nearly breaking his owner's collarbone when he flung the fella for getting in his way.) I had a store of seeds to replant with, and I had a whole heap of bull manure to enrich the soil with! Sometimes I find it difficult to imagine what life must be like in a war-torn area — or where we're basically slaves to Walmart, or where our waterways are full of toxins etc. It can be so easy to be overwhelmed by my own petty struggles when millions would give anything to be able to live like me....

Sheri Ellery
Whirinaki, New Zealand

To the Editor,

This letter is in response to the Editor's Note in the Feb/March 2013 *Catholic Radical*.... The Editor's Note states that the practice of ordaining women as deacons is “defined by Saint Paul in his first letter to Timothy and in Romans 16 where he calls Phoebe a deacon of the Church.” And then goes on to conclude that “refusal to make this step [ordination of women] widens the gap between modern Church rules and the practice of the earliest followers of Christ.” They state that “the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker community

will continue to pray for the ordination of women.”

At first glance, Romans 16:1 which states **“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the Church...”** does seem to support the editor’s position that the early Church ordained women.

However, reaching this conclusion based solely on this text is to make the same mistake that the Protestant Reformers made with their tradition of *sola scriptura* (by scripture alone). There is an inherent danger when we read the Bible on our own and look at the text from only a modern-American English-only speaking point of view. There is a much deeper historical view that requires the understanding of ancient languages, ancient cultures, and the history of teachings by the Church. Further, the “word of God” does not only refer to the written scriptures handed down to us from the early Church. The “word of God” also refers to Jesus Christ Himself who left us a Church with a Magisterium to help us understand the true meaning of our faith.

As faithful Catholics we each should read the Bible for personal inspiration and guidance. But when we read the Bible and extrapolate conclusions to determine what the greater Church should and should not do, we become our own Pope and dictator of our personal Magisterium much like the path taken by many past Protestant leaders, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin. For guidance on how to interpret the meaning of Scripture for the entire Church we should defer to primary sources such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and to notes written by Catholic biblical scholars. For example, the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible addresses both the reference to Phoebe as a ‘deaconess’ in Romans 16:1 and the reference to women in 1 Timothy. They explain the term ‘deaconess’ does not refer to an ordained office. Rather, the term ‘deaconess’ refers to a woman either married to a deacon or to a woman “who assisted with catechetical instructions and baptism of women.”

Our modern American culture is not very different from the culture at the time of Christ. The popular opinion in Jesus’ day was to join with the masses standing in front of Pilate and shout “Crucify Him” rather than humbly listen to Jesus Himself

who was actually standing directly before them. They thought they knew better than Jesus without taking the time to listen to Him. Today, it is popular to shout out against the teachings of the Catholic Church. But how many of us shouting take the time to humbly listen to Jesus Himself who is still speaking directly before us through His Church that He, Himself, established? We all need to stop shouting and investigate Catholic teachings deeper than the popular ‘water cooler theology’.

Mark A Netsch
Charlton, Massachusetts

Editor’s Note: The Second Vatican Council, while exhorting the faithful to act in union with the Magisterium, also encourages the input of lay women and men, as well as theologians, sociologists, and scientists in the interpretation and application of our faith in modern times. This practice began in the earliest days of the Church. Consider the confrontation between Saint Peter and Saint Paul found in the Letter to the Galatians 2:11-14. When Saint Peter, in deference to Jewish Christians, refuses to eat with Gentile Christians who had not become Jews under Mosaic Law, Paul confronts and corrects him. Yet, Saint Peter as the first Pope, having full teaching authority, and direct ordination from Jesus, backs down after realizing his error in his understanding and application of Jesus’ clear teaching. This was the first problem for the first “Magisterium” to consider, but it did not become an issue until Saint Paul (not directly ordained with the original twelve) made it an issue.

Our support for the ordination of women is based on the fact that God chose to incarnate the Body of Christ through a woman without the physical cooperation of a man, that Jesus chose the woman at the well to preach His Gospel, that women

were the first preachers of the good news of Christ’s resurrection, and that Saint Paul tells us that we are “all one in Christ” with “no male or female.” The current Catholic liturgical practice of barring women at Mass from reading the Gospel, preaching, and consecrating the Eucharist contradicts our broad sense of the Scripture and Catholic moral theology. Unlike Martin Luther and John



Calvin, we do not deviate from established Church practice, although we do pray and work for change. We hope this is not pride, but fidelity to conscience. We are inspired by saints, like Paul, who pushed the hierarchy to make changes that drew the Church closer to perfection.

Hi Scott,

I was thinking of your comment, that Walmart would use slaves, if it could, after seeing the “Lincoln” movie. At least the Southern slave-owners lived with their slaves, and had some degree of legal responsibility for them — not to mention a vested interest in their health. Yes the Abolitionists defeated the “Slave-Power” — but chattel slavery was already becoming obsolete, with the coming of the industrial revolution. The real, nascent Slave-Power, waiting in the wings, was Wall Street. So, ultimately, the Slave-Power has emerged victorious....

Joshua Laskin
Mansfield, Massachusetts

Catholic Worker Calendar



Stephen Noble

June 12, July 15 — Mass or Evening Prayer: Please join us in prayer and song on Mason Street at 7:30 P.M. Ice cream and/or watermelon to follow.

Mason Street Musings

I suffer from a common ailment — ignorance. That it doesn't turn into the more serious malady of delusion is a daily battle. Ignorance of my place within the Catholic Worker, more to the point — God's purpose for me here, is still an unknown after nearly six months. I see the desperation in the different faces of need that grace our house, and I know that I am supposed to be here for them. I muse over what more can be done to help them, and find myself verging on the delusion that I can save them.

It isn't just the steady stream of suffering that comes our way, the homeless, the addicted, the bi-polar, the schizophrenic that baffle me. The complex social networking that they must manage to stabilize their lives would be daunting to the most clear-headed and socially functional among us. What will save these people from their suffering? What is it that our house can do further for them? There it is again, that creeping disease of delusion begins to find a crevasse in my mind, the delusion that I or anyone can save anyone.

Since coming to the Catholic Worker I have witnessed the great resilience of our gracious hosts. You know their names by now. Time and again, day after day, for decades, they get up with, and often be-

fore the sun, to meet the needs of their guests. The word "activist" just barely de-



scribes them! I know they're reading this, so I won't embarrass them with the praise they are due. They know, as you the reader know, that it isn't about saving people. That is a grace of Heaven. It is about helping them along the way, and perhaps a safe house, a clean bed, and some decent food,

and time is all any of us can provide.

Each day the "house" itself seems to reflect the suffering of those who come our way. The single shower for six adults has finally been repaired, (thanks once again to Koz) only for us to discover a long-term unknown leak under the kitchen sink and the resulting damage. Half the house has now been rewired, but major modifications and their costs are still needed. Switches are broken on two overhead lights, the main burner on our stove gave out, and now the oven has problems! But despite the never ending needs of this inanimate wooden relic we call home, grace provides. For instance, several teenage volunteers and one great mom, from Saint John's High School, came this weekend for a major grounds cleanup. That was joy!

So, I am still in ignorance about just why I am here. I lend an ear, a hand, a word, and it doesn't seem like much, but then, only a deluded mind would think more is required. Then too when I have found myself in need, there has been so much unexpected grace. I have received so much more than I have given while living here. Perhaps that has been God's intention all the while, healing me of the delusion that I do not need help. Ω

Robert

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